



Horse rescue is in vain ^{ECHO} _{2/2/09}

● A HORSE had to be put down after getting stuck in a ditch.

Firefighters spent nearly an hour getting the 32-year-old mare out of the ditch by a field at Brick House Farm, Stock Road, West Hanningfield, on Friday afternoon.

Leading firefighter Ian Randall, from Leigh, said: "Unfortunately, there was nothing the vet could do and she had to be put down."

● FIREFIGHTERS were called to a house in Clifftown Parade, Southend, after a washing machine caught fire. The homeowner had put out the flames by the time officers arrived.

● A CAR radio, worth £100, was stolen from a vehicle parked in Belton Way car park, Leigh. Thieves caused £150 damage trying to get to the stereo.

will not get any compensation.

explosion on Friday morning.

dropped from aircraft.

disposal work is carried out.

We are not supporters of pro-traveller group

By JON AUSTIN
and MAX ORBACH

TWO MPs have distanced themselves from a pro-traveller parliamentary group.

The all-party Parliamentary group for gypsy and traveller law reform, made up of MPs, listed Southend West Tory MP David Amess and UKIP Castle Point MP Bob Spink as supporters.

The group pushes for travellers' rights and increasing legal site provision across the country.

Mr Spink admitted joining several years ago, but now disagrees with the group.

He said: "I didn't realise my name was on their list. I will ask them to remove it immediately"

Founder member, Lib Dem peer Lord Avebury, and administrative assistant Andrew Ryder are actively involved in the campaign to save the unauthorised Dale

□ But MPs admit they were once members

□ Bob Spink and David Amess named online

Farm site, at Crays Hill, from eviction.

The group has also been critical of Thurrock Council for resisting regional proposals for it to create an additional 44 caravan pitches.

In a letter to Thurrock Council leader Terry Hipsey, it suggested the idea of planning permission being given to illegal sites and extending authorised pitches in the borough.

Mr Spink said he joined the group when it was set up to ensure laws applied to travellers as they do to the settled community.

However, he later disagreed with its stance. He said: "The group isn't balanced, it's simply pursuing gypsy interests at the

expense of ordinary residents. That is why I haven't been to any of their meetings.

"I think the Dale Farm site is wrong. I think local people are astounded by the nerve of people who think they can be treated differently to everyone else."

Mr Amess is not a member according to the latest parliamentary register, however his name

still appears on the website. Ed Holmes, researcher for Mr Amess, said: "I am puzzled why his name is on the website, but I can assure you the official list is accurate and updated regularly."

Lord Avebury said he did not understand how the confusion had arisen, but said there were a number of sleeper members, who no longer attended meetings.

Compensation debate

COUNCILLORS will debate if compensation should be paid to travellers whose personal details were published online.

The Local Government Ombudsman said Basildon Council should pay £300 each to three families from the unauthorised Hovefields site, in Wickford.

It comes after they complained about the release of several peo-

ple's information, including health and benefits details, in a council agenda in January 2006.

Travellers from Dale Farm, Crays Hill, were also affected. However, Tory councillors have twice refused to pay up.

The matter has now been referred for debate at the full council meeting, which all councillors attend.